

#5883

AKIN GUMP  
STRAUSS HAUER & FELD LLP

Attorneys at Law

MELISSA L. LAURENZA  
202.887.4251  
mlaurenza@akingump.com

April 6, 2009

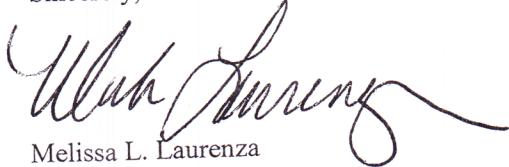
Mr. Jeffrey Gilday  
Registration Unit  
Department of Justice  
Public Office-9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
1400 New York Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Mr. Gilday:

On behalf of Neusner Communications, in compliance with the Foreign Agent Registration Act of 1938, as amended, we hereby file a copy of informational materials disseminated on behalf of the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey.

Please return a stamped copy of this filing to the waiting messenger. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding this submission.

Sincerely,

  
Melissa L. Laurenza

200 APP - 1112  
CRAVASS/REGISTRATION

**Laurenza, Melissa**

---

**From:** Noam Neusner [noam@neusner.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, April 03, 2009 4:36 PM  
**To:** Noam Neusner  
**Subject:** Turkey, Israel, and the US: A busy period, with great promise  
  
**Attachments:** image001.gif

Friends,

These past few weeks have been dramatic ones for Turkey-US-Israel relations, and the coming weeks promise more of the same. We have seen tensions, yes, but also significant progress on several significant issues. I want to quickly draw your attention to a few major developments that suggest the underlying strength of this strategic and historic friendship:

First, President Barack Obama is visiting Turkey this coming week. This visit occurs in the context of a multilateral meeting, the Alliance of Civilizations Summit, but will also include bilateral talks with both President Gul and Prime Minister Erdogan. President Obama is the fifth US President to visit Turkey.

Second, Turkey and Israel will be holding joint naval exercises this summer. This proves the underlying strength of that long-standing strategic relationship.

Third, Turkey and Armenia are reportedly at an advanced stage in the process of normalizing their relations. Should these two nations reach an agreement, this would represent a significant and historic achievement. The terms of that normalization would cover a range of issues, including borders, security, trade, energy, and historical commissions.

I have attached below two news stories that provide quite a bit of background on these developments, and encourage you to read them.

Best,

Noam

BRUSSELS -- Turkey and Armenia could soon announce a deal aimed at reopening their border and restoring relations, according to diplomats, a move that could help stabilize a region that's increasingly important as a transit route for oil and gas.

The timing of the deal is being choreographed with the schedule of U.S. President Barack Obama, who visits Turkey next week, these people say.

The Turkish and Armenian governments have agreed to terms in three areas: opening and fixing borders, restoring diplomatic relations and setting up a series of commissions to look at disputes, including one on the history of conflict between the two countries, according to the diplomats, all of whom declined to be named due to the sensitivity of the talks.

There is strong opposition to a deal in both countries, as well as in Armenia's neighbor Azerbaijan. Turkey closed its border with Armenia in 1993 to protest Armenia's occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh, an enclave in Azerbaijan, following a bloody war. That conflict remains unresolved.

But a deal is seen in Western capitals as a major potential success that could help to open up and stabilize an increasingly important transit corridor for oil and gas. The region is studded with unsettled conflicts and hostile borders, and saw war between Russia and Georgia last August.

Normalizing relations between Turkey and Armenia would "create a new and positive dynamic" in relations across the region, "as well as in developing the economic and transport links we have been pursuing ever since the collapse of the former Soviet Union," said U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew J. Bryza, the State Department's point man in the Caucasus.

Mr. Bryza travels to Azerbaijan Thursday to discuss how a Turkish-Armenian agreement could help revive efforts to secure a settlement on Nagorno-Karabakh.

Announcement of a Turkish-Armenian pact has also become caught up in Mr. Obama's campaign promise to support a Congressional resolution that would recognize as genocide the Ottoman Empire's 1915 killing of up to 1.5 million Armenians in what is now central and eastern Turkey. Turkey fiercely denies the killings were genocide. The White House traditionally makes a statement to mark Armenian Remembrance Day on April 24.

Analysts say Turkey's government hopes progress in reviving its relations with Armenia could prompt the White House not to recognize the killings as genocide and to block the Congressional resolution -- something previous U.S. presidents have done.

That gives the U.S. leverage to press Turkey into an agreement with Armenia, diplomats say, but only so long as the U.S. doesn't recognize the genocide.

If the U.S. proceeds with the genocide resolution, "the most important damage would be to Turkey's rapprochement with Armenia," said Özgür Ünlühisarcikli, director of the Ankara office of the German Marshall Fund of the United States, a think tank.

"I cannot imagine any Turkish government opening the Armenian border just after the U.S. Congress or the U.S. president has acknowledged the genocide," he said.

Recognition of the 1915 killings as genocide is a touchstone issue for the Armenian community in the U.S. -- some 385,000 people according to the 2000 census and several times that by some estimates. Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last week grilled Philip Gordon, Mr. Obama's pick for assistant secretary of State for European and Eurasian affairs, over articles he had written while at a think tank. In them, he emphasized the damage that recognizing the genocide would do to U.S. relations with Turkey.

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey said on Turkish television last week he would discuss Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenian "genocide" issue and relations between Russia

and Georgia with the U.S. president, among other issues.

A Senior Turkish foreign-policy official said the U.S. is trying to facilitate the agreement with Armenia. He said Turkey sees the proposed deal as a "win-win" proposition for the U.S., Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Mr. Obama's decision to make Turkey the final, two-day stop on his European tour has been welcomed in Ankara as a statement of the country's strategic importance.

Turkey, a secular Muslim nation of 70 million people, is taking on a growing role as a regional player in the Caucasus and the Middle East. It's also a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and is seeking membership in the European Union.

Suat Kiniklioglu, a legislator and deputy chairman for foreign affairs in Turkey's ruling Justice and Development party, described Mr. Obama's visit as "a very big deal" for Turkey. He said the government wants to revive its traditional alliance with the U.S. after eight "problematic" years during the administration of President George. W. Bush.

Turkey opposed the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 and refused to let its territory be used for the assault. Now the U.S. again wants to use its bases in Turkey for Iraq, but this time to withdraw troops -- something much easier for Ankara to accept.

Turkey could also prove a helpful ally in the Mideast, where it has played a mediating role between Syria and Israel and has offered to mediate with Iran.

Mr. Obama is popular in Turkey. In an opinion poll last month, 39% of Turks said they had confidence in Mr. Obama, far outstripping nine other leaders on the list. The same poll in 2005 gave then President Bush 9% approval. Mr. Obama is expected to address the Turkish parliament in Ankara before heading to Istanbul.

One date under discussion for signing the deal with Armenia, diplomats say, is April 16, between Mr. Obama's visit to Turkey and the expected April 24 Armenia statement. The process of reopening borders and restoring diplomatic relations is expected to take weeks or months, diplomats say.

Senior officials on both sides declined to comment on the status of the talks, a sign of the sensitivity of the issue.

The attempt at Turkish-Armenian rapprochement has sparked strident opposition. Some Armenians worry a deal could derail pressure for the U.S. to recognize the 1915 killing of Armenians as genocide. Azerbaijan is concerned reopening border could reduce pressure for Armenia to make concessions needed for a settlement in Nagorno-Karabakh. Turkish nationalists oppose what they see as a betrayal of fellow Muslim and Turkic Azerbaijan.

Mr. Ünlühisarcikli said he believes Turkey and Armenia won't be ready to sign the deal before April 24, and Turkey instead may offer a strong "signal" of its commitment to reopen the borders in the hope that will be enough for Washington.

Russia's invasion of Georgia last August opened the door for Turkey to become more heavily engaged in the Caucasus. The war showed the limitations of U.S. and European Union influence in the region, as well as the instability caused by three so-called frozen conflicts: Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia, and Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan.

The war also exposed the extent of Armenia's isolation, caused by the closure of its borders to two neighbors, Turkey and Azerbaijan. When Russia cut Georgia's main East-West railway by blowing up a bridge last August, it also cut off the dominant supply route to Armenia, a close Russian ally. That experience softened opposition from Moscow and Yerevan, the Armenian capital, to greater Turkish involvement in the region.

In September, just weeks after the August war, Turkey's president, Abdullah Gü'l, accepted an invitation to watch a soccer match in Yerevan.

The war in Georgia also showed the vulnerability of Western-built and operated pipelines that carry oil and natural gas from Azerbaijan to Western markets via Georgia and Armenia. The 1,770-kilometer Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline carries one million barrels of crude per day from Baku to Turkey's Mediterranean coast. The EU hopes a gas pipeline from Baku to Northern Turkey will help feed its Nabucco pipeline project, to bring gas from the Caspian

to Austria. The pipelines were bombed, though not hit, during the Georgia war.

—Nicholas Birch in Istanbul contributed to this article.



image001.gif (3 KB)

T e Jerusalem Post Internet Edition <<http://www.jpost.com/>>

Turkey, Israel to hold joint exercises

Mar. 31, 2009

Yaakov Katz , THE JERUSALEM POST

Israel will take part in a joint naval exercise with Turkey this summer despite months of tense relations between Jerusalem and Ankara.

Defense officials said the Israel Navy would allocate at least one missile ship to participate in a search-and-rescue exercise in the Mediterranean Sea in July. Other NATO member countries are expected to join the drill.

The Israeli and Turkish navies have enjoyed years of strong ties and participate annually in joint maneuvers throughout the region.

While there was never a real fear that this year's exercise would be canceled, the possibility was raised due to the strained relations between Turkey and Israel since Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan castigated Israel during Operation Cast Lead, defense officials said.

OC Ground Forces Command Maj.-Gen. Avi Mizrahi also raised Ankara's ire in February when he told a conference of IDF officers at the National Defense College that Erdogan needed to look in the mirror before criticizing Israel.

Mizrahi said Turkey was not in a position to condemn Israeli actions in Gaza when it stations troops in northern Cyprus and massacred Armenians during World War I.

Mizrahi's comments followed Erdogan's harsh criticism of Israel at the World Economic Forum in Davos during a panel with President Shimon Peres.

These materials are distributed by Neusner Communications on behalf of the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

AKIN GUMP  
STRAUSS HAUER & FELD LLP

Attorneys at Law

MELISSA L. LAURENZA  
202.887.4251  
mlaurenza@akingump.com

April 6, 2009

Mr. Jeffrey Gilday  
Registration Unit  
Department of Justice  
Public Office-9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
1400 New York Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Mr. Gilday:

On behalf of Neusner Communications, in compliance with the Foreign Agent Registration Act of 1938, as amended, we hereby file a copy of informational materials disseminated on behalf of the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey.

Please return a stamped copy of this filing to the waiting messenger. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding this submission.

Sincerely,

  
Melissa L. Laurenza

2009 APR - 6 PM 12:39  
CRIMISS/REGISTRATION UNIT

**Laurenza, Melissa**

---

**From:** Noam Neusner [noam@neusner.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, April 03, 2009 4:36 PM  
**To:** Noam Neusner  
**Subject:** Turkey, Israel, and the US: A busy period, with great promise  
  
**Attachments:** image001.gif

Friends,

These past few weeks have been dramatic ones for Turkey-US-Israel relations, and the coming weeks promise more of the same. We have seen tensions, yes, but also significant progress on several significant issues. I want to quickly draw your attention to a few major developments that suggest the underlying strength of this strategic and historic friendship:

First, President Barack Obama is visiting Turkey this coming week. This visit occurs in the context of a multilateral meeting, the Alliance of Civilizations Summit, but will also include bilateral talks with both President Gul and Prime Minister Erdogan. President Obama is the fifth US President to visit Turkey.

Second, Turkey and Israel will be holding joint naval exercises this summer. This proves the underlying strength of that long-standing strategic relationship.

Third, Turkey and Armenia are reportedly at an advanced stage in the process of normalizing their relations. Should these two nations reach an agreement, this would represent a significant and historic achievement. The terms of that normalization would cover a range of issues, including borders, security, trade, energy, and historical commissions.

I have attached below two news stories that provide quite a bit of background on these developments, and encourage you to read them.

Best,

Noam

BRUSSELS -- Turkey and Armenia could soon announce a deal aimed at reopening their border and restoring relations, according to diplomats, a move that could help stabilize a region that's increasingly important as a transit route for oil and gas.

The timing of the deal is being choreographed with the schedule of U.S. President Barack Obama, who visits Turkey next week, these people say.

The Turkish and Armenian governments have agreed to terms in three areas: opening and fixing borders, restoring diplomatic relations and setting up a series of commissions to look at disputes, including one on the history of conflict between the two countries, according to the diplomats, all of whom declined to be named due to the sensitivity of the talks.

There is strong opposition to a deal in both countries, as well as in Armenia's neighbor Azerbaijan. Turkey closed its border with Armenia in 1993 to protest Armenia's occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh, an enclave in Azerbaijan, following a bloody war. That conflict remains unresolved.

But a deal is seen in Western capitals as a major potential success that could help to open up and stabilize an increasingly important transit corridor for oil and gas. The region is studded with unsettled conflicts and hostile borders, and saw war between Russia and Georgia last August.

Normalizing relations between Turkey and Armenia would "create a new and positive dynamic" in relations across the region, "as well as in developing the economic and transport links we have been pursuing ever since the collapse of the former Soviet Union," said U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew J. Bryza, the State Department's point man in the Caucasus.

Mr. Bryza travels to Azerbaijan Thursday to discuss how a Turkish-Armenian agreement could help revive efforts to secure a settlement on Nagorno-Karabakh.

Announcement of a Turkish-Armenian pact has also become caught up in Mr. Obama's campaign promise to support a Congressional resolution that would recognize as genocide the Ottoman Empire's 1915 killing of up to 1.5 million Armenians in what is now central and eastern Turkey. Turkey fiercely denies the killings were genocide. The White House traditionally makes a statement to mark Armenian Remembrance Day on April 24.

Analysts say Turkey's government hopes progress in reviving its relations with Armenia could prompt the White House not to recognize the killings as genocide and to block the Congressional resolution -- something previous U.S. presidents have done.

That gives the U.S. leverage to press Turkey into an agreement with Armenia, diplomats say, but only so long as the U.S. doesn't recognize the genocide.

If the U.S. proceeds with the genocide resolution, "the most important damage would be to Turkey's rapprochement with Armenia," said Özgür Ünlühisarcikli, director of the Ankara office of the German Marshall Fund of the United States, a think tank.

"I cannot imagine any Turkish government opening the Armenian border just after the U.S. Congress or the U.S. president has acknowledged the genocide," he said.

Recognition of the 1915 killings as genocide is a touchstone issue for the Armenian community in the U.S. -- some 385,000 people according to the 2000 census and several times that by some estimates. Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last week grilled Philip Gordon, Mr. Obama's pick for assistant secretary of State for European and Eurasian affairs, over articles he had written while at a think tank. In them, he emphasized the damage that recognizing the genocide would do to U.S. relations with Turkey.

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey said on Turkish television last week he would discuss Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenian "genocide" issue and relations between Russia

and Georgia with the U.S. president, among other issues.

A Senior Turkish foreign-policy official said the U.S. is trying to facilitate the agreement with Armenia. He said Turkey sees the proposed deal as a "win-win" proposition for the U.S., Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Mr. Obama's decision to make Turkey the final, two-day stop on his European tour has been welcomed in Ankara as a statement of the country's strategic importance.

Turkey, a secular Muslim nation of 70 million people, is taking on a growing role as a regional player in the Caucasus and the Middle East. It's also a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and is seeking membership in the European Union.

Suat Kiniklioglu, a legislator and deputy chairman for foreign affairs in Turkey's ruling Justice and Development party, described Mr. Obama's visit as "a very big deal" for Turkey. He said the government wants to revive its traditional alliance with the U.S. after eight "problematic" years during the administration of President George W. Bush.

Turkey opposed the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 and refused to let its territory be used for the assault. Now the U.S. again wants to use its bases in Turkey for Iraq, but this time to withdraw troops -- something much easier for Ankara to accept.

Turkey could also prove a helpful ally in the Mideast, where it has played a mediating role between Syria and Israel and has offered to mediate with Iran.

Mr. Obama is popular in Turkey. In an opinion poll last month, 39% of Turks said they had confidence in Mr. Obama, far outstripping nine other leaders on the list. The same poll in 2005 gave then President Bush 9% approval. Mr. Obama is expected to address the Turkish parliament in Ankara before heading to Istanbul.

One date under discussion for signing the deal with Armenia, diplomats say, is April 16, between Mr. Obama's visit to Turkey and the expected April 24 Armenia statement. The process of reopening borders and restoring diplomatic relations is expected to take weeks or months, diplomats say.

Senior officials on both sides declined to comment on the status of the talks, a sign of the sensitivity of the issue.

The attempt at Turkish-Armenian rapprochement has sparked strident opposition. Some Armenians worry a deal could derail pressure for the U.S. to recognize the 1915 killing of Armenians as genocide. Azerbaijan is concerned reopening border could reduce pressure for Armenia to make concessions needed for a settlement in Nagorno-Karabakh. Turkish nationalists oppose what they see as a betrayal of fellow Muslim and Turkic Azerbaijan.

Mr. Ünlühisarcikli said he believes Turkey and Armenia won't be ready to sign the deal before April 24, and Turkey instead may offer a strong "signal" of its commitment to reopen the borders in the hope that will be enough for Washington.

Russia's invasion of Georgia last August opened the door for Turkey to become more heavily engaged in the Caucasus. The war showed the limitations of U.S. and European Union influence in the region, as well as the instability caused by three so-called frozen conflicts: Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia, and Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan.

The war also exposed the extent of Armenia's isolation, caused by the closure of its borders to two neighbors, Turkey and Azerbaijan. When Russia cut Georgia's main East-West railway by blowing up a bridge last August, it also cut off the dominant supply route to Armenia, a close Russian ally. That experience softened opposition from Moscow and Yerevan, the Armenian capital, to greater Turkish involvement in the region.

In September, just weeks after the August war, Turkey's president, Abdullah Gü'l, accepted an invitation to watch a soccer match in Yerevan.

The war in Georgia also showed the vulnerability of Western-built and operated pipelines that carry oil and natural gas from Azerbaijan to Western markets via Georgia and Armenia. The 1,770-kilometer Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline carries one million barrels of crude per day from Baku to Turkey's Mediterranean coast. The EU hopes a gas pipeline from Baku to Northern Turkey will help feed its Nabucco pipeline project, to bring gas from the Caspian

to Austria. The pipelines were bombed, though not hit, during the Georgia war.

—Nicholas Birch in Istanbul contributed to this article.



image001.gif (3 KB)

T e Jerusalem Post Internet Edition <<http://www.jpost.com/>>

Turkey, Israel to hold joint exercises

Mar. 31, 2009

Yaakov Katz , THE JERUSALEM POST

Israel will take part in a joint naval exercise with Turkey this summer despite months of tense relations between Jerusalem and Ankara.

Defense officials said the Israel Navy would allocate at least one missile ship to participate in a search-and-rescue exercise in the Mediterranean Sea in July. Other NATO member countries are expected to join the drill.

The Israeli and Turkish navies have enjoyed years of strong ties and participate annually in joint maneuvers throughout the region.

While there was never a real fear that this year's exercise would be canceled, the possibility was raised due to the strained relations between Turkey and Israel since Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan castigated Israel during Operation Cast Lead, defense officials said.

OC Ground Forces Command Maj.-Gen. Avi Mizrahi also raised Ankara's ire in February when he told a conference of IDF officers at the National Defense College that Erdogan needed to look in the mirror before criticizing Israel.

Mizrahi said Turkey was not in a position to condemn Israeli actions in Gaza when it stations troops in northern Cyprus and massacred Armenians during World War I.

Mizrahi's comments followed Erdogan's harsh criticism of Israel at the World Economic Forum in Davos during a panel with President Shimon Peres.

These materials are distributed by Neusner Communications on behalf of the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

AKIN GUMP  
STRAUSS HAUER & FELD LLP

Attorneys at Law

MELISSA L. LAURENZA  
202.887.4251  
mlaurenza@akingump.com

209 APR - 6 PM 12:39  
CRIMISS/REGISTRATION UNIT

April 6, 2009

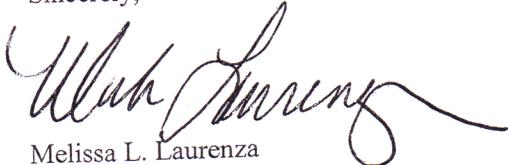
Mr. Jeffrey Gilday  
Registration Unit  
Department of Justice  
Public Office-9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
1400 New York Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Mr. Gilday:

On behalf of Neusner Communications, in compliance with the Foreign Agent Registration Act of 1938, as amended, we hereby file a copy of informational materials disseminated on behalf of the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey.

Please return a stamped copy of this filing to the waiting messenger. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding this submission.

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melissa L. Laurenza".

Melissa L. Laurenza

**Laurenza, Melissa**

---

**From:** Noam Neusner [noam@neusner.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, April 03, 2009 4:36 PM  
**To:** Noam Neusner  
**Subject:** Turkey, Israel, and the US: A busy period, with great promise  
  
**Attachments:** image001.gif

Friends,

These past few weeks have been dramatic ones for Turkey-US-Israel relations, and the coming weeks promise more of the same. We have seen tensions, yes, but also significant progress on several significant issues. I want to quickly draw your attention to a few major developments that suggest the underlying strength of this strategic and historic friendship:

First, President Barack Obama is visiting Turkey this coming week. This visit occurs in the context of a multilateral meeting, the Alliance of Civilizations Summit, but will also include bilateral talks with both President Gul and Prime Minister Erdogan. President Obama is the fifth US President to visit Turkey.

Second, Turkey and Israel will be holding joint naval exercises this summer. This proves the underlying strength of that long-standing strategic relationship.

Third, Turkey and Armenia are reportedly at an advanced stage in the process of normalizing their relations. Should these two nations reach an agreement, this would represent a significant and historic achievement. The terms of that normalization would cover a range of issues, including borders, security, trade, energy, and historical commissions.

I have attached below two news stories that provide quite a bit of background on these developments, and encourage you to read them.

Best,

Noam

BRUSSELS -- Turkey and Armenia could soon announce a deal aimed at reopening their border and restoring relations, according to diplomats, a move that could help stabilize a region that's increasingly important as a transit route for oil and gas.

The timing of the deal is being choreographed with the schedule of U.S. President Barack Obama, who visits Turkey next week, these people say.

The Turkish and Armenian governments have agreed to terms in three areas: opening and fixing borders, restoring diplomatic relations and setting up a series of commissions to look at disputes, including one on the history of conflict between the two countries, according to the diplomats, all of whom declined to be named due to the sensitivity of the talks.

There is strong opposition to a deal in both countries, as well as in Armenia's neighbor Azerbaijan. Turkey closed its border with Armenia in 1993 to protest Armenia's occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh, an enclave in Azerbaijan, following a bloody war. That conflict remains unresolved.

But a deal is seen in Western capitals as a major potential success that could help to open up and stabilize an increasingly important transit corridor for oil and gas. The region is studded with unsettled conflicts and hostile borders, and saw war between Russia and Georgia last August.

Normalizing relations between Turkey and Armenia would "create a new and positive dynamic" in relations across the region, "as well as in developing the economic and transport links we have been pursuing ever since the collapse of the former Soviet Union," said U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew J. Bryza, the State Department's point man in the Caucasus.

Mr. Bryza travels to Azerbaijan Thursday to discuss how a Turkish-Armenian agreement could help revive efforts to secure a settlement on Nagorno-Karabakh.

Announcement of a Turkish-Armenian pact has also become caught up in Mr. Obama's campaign promise to support a Congressional resolution that would recognize as genocide the Ottoman Empire's 1915 killing of up to 1.5 million Armenians in what is now central and eastern Turkey. Turkey fiercely denies the killings were genocide. The White House traditionally makes a statement to mark Armenian Remembrance Day on April 24.

Analysts say Turkey's government hopes progress in reviving its relations with Armenia could prompt the White House not to recognize the killings as genocide and to block the Congressional resolution -- something previous U.S. presidents have done.

That gives the U.S. leverage to press Turkey into an agreement with Armenia, diplomats say, but only so long as the U.S. doesn't recognize the genocide.

If the U.S. proceeds with the genocide resolution, "the most important damage would be to Turkey's rapprochement with Armenia," said Özgür Ünlühisarcikli, director of the Ankara office of the German Marshall Fund of the United States, a think tank.

"I cannot imagine any Turkish government opening the Armenian border just after the U.S. Congress or the U.S. president has acknowledged the genocide," he said.

Recognition of the 1915 killings as genocide is a touchstone issue for the Armenian community in the U.S. -- some 385,000 people according to the 2000 census and several times that by some estimates. Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last week grilled Philip Gordon, Mr. Obama's pick for assistant secretary of State for European and Eurasian affairs, over articles he had written while at a think tank. In them, he emphasized the damage that recognizing the genocide would do to U.S. relations with Turkey.

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey said on Turkish television last week he would discuss Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenian "genocide" issue and relations between Russia

and Georgia with the U.S. president, among other issues.

A Senior Turkish foreign-policy official said the U.S. is trying to facilitate the agreement with Armenia. He said Turkey sees the proposed deal as a "win-win" proposition for the U.S., Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Mr. Obama's decision to make Turkey the final, two-day stop on his European tour has been welcomed in Ankara as a statement of the country's strategic importance.

Turkey, a secular Muslim nation of 70 million people, is taking on a growing role as a regional player in the Caucasus and the Middle East. It's also a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and is seeking membership in the European Union.

Suat Kiniklioglu, a legislator and deputy chairman for foreign affairs in Turkey's ruling Justice and Development party, described Mr. Obama's visit as "a very big deal" for Turkey. He said the government wants to revive its traditional alliance with the U.S. after eight "problematic" years during the administration of President George W. Bush.

Turkey opposed the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 and refused to let its territory be used for the assault. Now the U.S. again wants to use its bases in Turkey for Iraq, but this time to withdraw troops -- something much easier for Ankara to accept.

Turkey could also prove a helpful ally in the Mideast, where it has played a mediating role between Syria and Israel and has offered to mediate with Iran.

Mr. Obama is popular in Turkey. In an opinion poll last month, 39% of Turks said they had confidence in Mr. Obama, far outstripping nine other leaders on the list. The same poll in 2005 gave then President Bush 9% approval. Mr. Obama is expected to address the Turkish parliament in Ankara before heading to Istanbul.

One date under discussion for signing the deal with Armenia, diplomats say, is April 16, between Mr. Obama's visit to Turkey and the expected April 24 Armenia statement. The process of reopening borders and restoring diplomatic relations is expected to take weeks or months, diplomats say.

Senior officials on both sides declined to comment on the status of the talks, a sign of the sensitivity of the issue.

The attempt at Turkish-Armenian rapprochement has sparked strident opposition. Some Armenians worry a deal could derail pressure for the U.S. to recognize the 1915 killing of Armenians as genocide. Azerbaijan is concerned reopening border could reduce pressure for Armenia to make concessions needed for a settlement in Nagorno-Karabakh. Turkish nationalists oppose what they see as a betrayal of fellow Muslim and Turkic Azerbaijan.

Mr. Ünlühisarcikli said he believes Turkey and Armenia won't be ready to sign the deal before April 24, and Turkey instead may offer a strong "signal" of its commitment to reopen the borders in the hope that will be enough for Washington.

Russia's invasion of Georgia last August opened the door for Turkey to become more heavily engaged in the Caucasus. The war showed the limitations of U.S. and European Union influence in the region, as well as the instability caused by three so-called frozen conflicts: Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia, and Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan.

The war also exposed the extent of Armenia's isolation, caused by the closure of its borders to two neighbors, Turkey and Azerbaijan. When Russia cut Georgia's main East-West railway by blowing up a bridge last August, it also cut off the dominant supply route to Armenia, a close Russian ally. That experience softened opposition from Moscow and Yerevan, the Armenian capital, to greater Turkish involvement in the region.

In September, just weeks after the August war, Turkey's president, Abdullah Gü'l, accepted an invitation to watch a soccer match in Yerevan.

The war in Georgia also showed the vulnerability of Western-built and operated pipelines that carry oil and natural gas from Azerbaijan to Western markets via Georgia and Armenia. The 1,770-kilometer Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline carries one million barrels of crude per day from Baku to Turkey's Mediterranean coast. The EU hopes a gas pipeline from Baku to Northern Turkey will help feed its Nabucco pipeline project, to bring gas from the Caspian

to Austria. The pipelines were bombed, though not hit, during the Georgia war.

—Nicholas Birch in Istanbul contributed to this article.



image001.gif (3 KB)

T e Jerusalem Post Internet Edition <<http://www.jpost.com/>>

Turkey, Israel to hold joint exercises

Mar. 31, 2009

Yaakov Katz , THE JERUSALEM POST

Israel will take part in a joint naval exercise with Turkey this summer despite months of tense relations between Jerusalem and Ankara.

Defense officials said the Israel Navy would allocate at least one missile ship to participate in a search-and-rescue exercise in the Mediterranean Sea in July. Other NATO member countries are expected to join the drill.

The Israeli and Turkish navies have enjoyed years of strong ties and participate annually in joint maneuvers throughout the region.

While there was never a real fear that this year's exercise would be canceled, the possibility was raised due to the strained relations between Turkey and Israel since Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan castigated Israel during Operation Cast Lead, defense officials said.

OC Ground Forces Command Maj.-Gen. Avi Mizrahi also raised Ankara's ire in February when he told a conference of IDF officers at the National Defense College that Erdogan needed to look in the mirror before criticizing Israel.

Mizrahi said Turkey was not in a position to condemn Israeli actions in Gaza when it stations troops in northern Cyprus and massacred Armenians during World War I.

Mizrahi's comments followed Erdogan's harsh criticism of Israel at the World Economic Forum in Davos during a panel with President Shimon Peres.

These materials are distributed by Neusner Communications on behalf of the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.